



WATER SAMPLING PROCEDURE FOR COLIFORM BACTERIA ANALYSIS

The individual well user can collect coliform bacteria samples without difficulty. Most laboratories and well drillers will perform sampling for a fee if you are unable to. If you do it yourself, keep in mind that you should follow proper sampling procedures in order to get the best sample possible from your well. Improper sample handling or failure to follow the simple procedures listed below may result in a false positive result.

To collect the sample you will need a small quantity of household liquid bleach and a bacteria sample bottle. Sample bottles can be obtained, free of charge, at the Gallatin Local Water Quality District or Gallatin City-County Environmental Health Services offices located at the Courthouse. Sample bottles can also be obtained from one of the laboratories listed in the Yellow Pages. You can also review the Certified Montana Laboratories Fact Sheet. A listing of labs serving this area is located on the back of this sheet.

PROCEDURE:

Important Timetables: Many laboratories do not accept water samples for bacterial analysis after Thursday. Consult the lab you plan to use before collecting the sample. You should deliver the sample to the lab within 30 hours. Keep the sample refrigerated (not frozen) prior to delivery to the lab.

Select the sampling point: If you have a water softener or filtration system installed in your house you will need to collect the sample at a faucet between the well and the treatment unit. If you do not have a household treatment system, take the sample from the kitchen sink. Other faucets may be used for sampling, however the kitchen faucet is used most often for drinking water in the home.

Once you have selected a sampling point: Remove the faucet screen and aerator from the faucet (if present). Clean the exterior of the faucet with a chlorine bleach solution (1/2 teaspoon bleach in 8 ounces of water). Then clean the interior threads of the faucet mouth. Run the hot water for five minutes and then the cold for at least two minutes.

When you are ready: Open the sample bottle being careful **not to touch** the inside of the container or lid. If you do, discard the container and use another. When you open the bottle, you will observe a small amount of powder or liquid in the bottle; this is a preservative added by the lab. **Do not rinse the bottle!** Reduce the flow of water to the size of a pencil, and fill the sample bottle to the top shoulder of the container. Put the lid on tightly.

Finally: Complete the sampling information form provided with each sample bottle. Then deliver the sample to the laboratory you have selected for analysis. If mailing your sample, remember to do so the same day you collect the sample.

When in doubt, call the lab or Gallatin Local Water Quality District and ask questions prior to sampling.



Gallatin Local Water Quality District
1709 W. College Street, Suite 104
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 582-3148 / 3145
www.gallatin.mt.gov/GLWQD

Montana Laboratories Certified for the Analysis of Drinking Water

CERTIFIED MONTANA LABS LABORATORIES	CERTIFIED FOR						
	Microbiological	Nitrate	*Inorganics	**SOCs	***VOCs	Metals	Asbestos
AMATEC 1537 Avenue D, Suite 141 Billings, MT 59104 406-248-2159	Yes						
Aqua Tech Laboratory 505 W. Main, Suite 320 Lewistown, MT 59457 406-538-6988	Yes						
Billings Public Utilities Dept. Lab 2251 Bellknap Billings, MT 59101 406-657-8346	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	
Energy Laboratories Inc. - Billings 1120 S. 27th St. 406-252-6325 Billings, MT 59107 800-735-4489	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Energy Laboratories Inc. - Helena P. O. Box 5688 Helena, MT 59604 406-442-0711	Yes	Yes					
EMSL Analytical, Inc. 107 W. 4th St. Libby, MT 59923 406-293-9066							Yes
Great Falls Water Treatment Plant Lab P. O. Box 5021 Great Falls, MT 59403 406-727-1325	Yes						
MSE Technical Applications, Inc. 200 Technology Way Butte, MT 59701 406-494-7334	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	
Mission Mountain Laboratories P. O. Box 606 Arlee, MT 59821 406-370-1089	Yes	Yes					
Missoula City-County Health Dept. Water Lab 301 West Alder Missoula, MT 59802 406-523-4755	Yes						
Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology 11300 West Park Butte, MT 59701 406-494-4747		Yes	Yes			Yes	
Montana Environmental Laboratory P. O. Box 8900 Kalispell, MT 59904 406-755-2131	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Mountain Zone Laboratory, LLC 302 Indian Creek Road 4 Huntley, MT 59037 406-208-4659	Yes						
Northern Analytical Laboratories Inc. 602 South 25th Street Billings, MT 59107 406-254-7226		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
RD Water Lab LLC. P. O. Box 5064 Missoula, MT 59806 406-721-8179	Yes						
State of MT DPHHS-Environmental Lab 1400 Broadway - P. O. Box 4369 Helena, MT 59620-4369 406-444-2642	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

*Inorganic compounds (metals, salts, etc.)

**SOCs are synthetic organic chemicals (pesticides, etc.)

***VOCs are volatile organic chemicals (solvents, etc.)

This list is subject to change without notification and will be updated as laboratories obtain certification.

List obtained from MT DEQ (Public Water) Revised January 19, 2007.